



# United States Department of the Interior

## BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT

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8550(P)  
CA-170.4

To Whom It May Concern:

The attached IMP Case Summary provides information on two proposed actions within three Wilderness Study Areas in the Volcanic Tableland, Bishop Resource Area. We will be preparing an environmental assessment for the proposals in the next month. We request that you provide any comments on the proposals to our office by November 29<sup>th</sup>, 2004. Temporary Use Permits (TUPS) for the same activities outside of the Wilderness Study Areas have already been issued to the proponents for November and December of 2004.

For further information on these proposed actions, contact Larry Primosch, Lands and Realty Specialist, Bishop Field Office, 351 Pacu Lane Suite 100, Bishop, CA 93514, (760)-872-5031. For information on the Wilderness Study Areas contact Diana Pietrasanta, Wilderness Specialist, Bishop Field Office, (760) 872-5028.

Sincerely,

/S/  
Bill Dunkelberger  
Bishop Field Manager

Attachments: (1)

Cc: Paul Brink, CSO

## IMP CASE SUMMARY

**State:** California

**District:** Bishop Field Office

**Wilderness Study Areas:**

Chidago Canyon WSA-CA-010-079	<b>County:</b> Mono	<b>WSA Acreage:</b> 19,702 ac.
Fish Slough WSA-CA-010-080	<b>County:</b> Mono/Inyo	<b>WSA Acreage:</b> 14,700 ac.
Volcanic Tablelands-WSA CA-010-081	<b>County:</b> Mono/Inyo	<b>WSA Acreage:</b> 12,499 ac.

**Location:** BLM, Bishop Field Office  
351 Pacu Lane, Suite 100  
Bishop, CA 93514

**Catagory:** Temporary Use Permit-Geotechnical Testing

**Background:**

The proponents are interested in performing geotechnical testing for low frequency electromagnetic sounding methods, specifically in the Volcanic Tableland WSAs due to the highly resistive soil located there. This soil property is specific to the Bishop tuff substructure. In a survey of known sites around the United States, the Tableland is one of the few areas that suits the physical need of this particular geotechnical testing. Alternate sites outside of the WSAs will work, but these areas are not large enough to accommodate the testing necessary due to edge effects created by cliffs, surface disturbances, power lines, etc. Additionally, the testing is dependent on as thick of an unsaturated zone as possible (thickest tuff layer), many of which are within the WSAs. There is also existing, solid data on the physical properties of the WSAs which the proponents feel allows them to compare measurements with previous results and reduce the uncertainty in their data. Data on the subsurface structure outside of the WSAs is less well-known, which may result in more uncertain test results. The Bishop Field Office intends to prepare an environmental assessment (EA) to evaluate the impacts of the proposed geotechnical testing within the Chidago Canyon, Volcanic Tablelands and Fish Slough WSAs. The EA would also analyze the need to perform this particular research within the WSAs.

**Description of Proposed Action:**

The proposed action would be the issuance of a Temporary Use Permit (TUP) to Cynthia Dinwiddie of Southwest Research Institute for a period of three months (of which one month would be on site in the Tableland) for geotechnical testing related to planetary research. The access would be on existing dirt routes. All equipment would be carried to various sites. No off route vehicle travel would be necessary. The objective would be to image both the geology and the water table below the Volcanic Tableland using DC resistivity, transient electromagnetic and ground-penetrating radar. Testing would require pounding four ½" diameter rods into the ground about 3"-12" deep along a line and connecting the rods with wire laid on the ground surface. Rods would be moved along a linear transect for a distance of up to a mile, data being collected each time the rods are moved further and further apart. Rods would be removed after the test. The radar test would use hand carried antennae which are moved to various areas to conduct

testing and placed on the ground surface. Another type of equipment would be loaded onto a 4 ft. square piece of plywood which would be dragged over the ground by hand. This test would only be conducted on dirt routes with an existing 4 ft. wide tread and having no vegetation in the median. Tracks would be raked out.

The second proposed action would be the issuance of a Temporary Use Permit (TUP) to Gregory Delory of University of California, Berkeley for a period of three months (of which one month would be on site in the Tableland) for a NASA funded program to develop low frequency electromagnetic sounding methods for future Mars and other planetary spacecraft. The Berkeley proposal is the same as Southwest Research Institute proposal, the only difference being the use of more hand carried devices and any equipment being dragged along dirt routes would only be used in areas where there is no vegetation, within the route median, where the width of the equipment could be accommodated in the existing tread. These criteria would probably eliminate most areas within the WSAs. If used, the tracks would be raked out.

Only one linear test site per WSA per proposal is planned in order to provide the researchers with the data they need. This would be addressed in the upcoming environmental assessment.

**Location:**

Various locations within the Chidago Canyon WSA-CA-010-079, Fish Slough WSA-CA-010-080, and Volcanic Tablelands WSA-CA-010-081. Proponents would use existing dirt routes to access the interior of the WSAs using pick-up trucks. No off- route vehicle travel would be allowed. Equipment would be carried to areas and the only impacts would be foot traffic and the ½ diameter holes from the rods which would be filled upon completion of the testing.

**IMP Conformance:**

The Interim Management Policy for Lands under Wilderness Review would provide the guidance necessary to evaluate the applicability and implementation of the proposals. The projects would be required to meet the non-impairment standard.

There is a 30 day public review period, starting from the date on the first page of this NOPA for all actions proposed within WSAs. There is also a 30-day minimum public review period for the completed environmental assessment, beginning from the date the EA is signed. If you would like a copy of the completed environmental assessment for this action, please contact the Bishop Field Office.